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Sunday 21st February—First Sunday in Lent (B)

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**Sunday Mass Streamed from St Mary's at 10am**

**We pray for those who have died recently:** Maime Malkowska, Tony Whyte, Sarah Graham and Kathleen Johnstone; **and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time:** Isabella Taylor, Ann Taylor, Rose Sandeman and Peter Gallacher. We also remember all those mentioned in our books of remembrance. **Prayers for the sick:** Please continue to remember in your prayers the sick, especially those mentioned on our sick lists.

**Lent 2021**

We will begin this Lent as we ended Lent last year—in Lockdown. However, our Lenten journey will continue and we can offer to the Lord the additional and continuing sacrifice of being isolated physically from one another. We will continue to remember one another in our prayers: we pray in a particular way for all those who are suffering due to physical isolation from family and friends.

**Gospel Reflections:** The Gospel reflection (Lectio Divina) for the following Sunday will continue this Tuesday at 7pm (Facebook).

**Stations of the Cross:** There will be the opportunity to meditate together on the Stations of the Cross on Friday evenings at 7pm (Facebook). I have also added an attachment with Stations of the Cross which the Bishop sent as another aid to our Lenten prayer life.

**Recent Clergy Changes:** As we pray for those priests and communities who will experience change in the coming weeks, we pray more earnestly for vocations to the priesthood for our Diocese.

**SCIAF Lenten Campaign 2021:** WEE BOX, BIG CHANGE. This year's SCIAF Lent appeal focuses on South Sudan where a generation of children with disabilities are locked out of education and trapped in a cycle of poverty. When a crisis comes, be it conflict, famine or even the coronavirus, it's vulnerable children who suffer most. They may not be able to go to school or, later on, to work and earn a living. They often face stigma and exclusion. Please give to SCIAF this Lent and help change lives. (Between 12th February and 11th May all donations through the WEE BOX, BIG CHANGE appeal will be doubled by the UK Government). As many of us will not have out collection boxes for the start of Lent, once you have read your newsletter, please tear off the strip below and tape it on to a jar to start your Lenten alms collection. Boxes can be collected at the parish house.



## SCIAF 2021

### WEE BOX : BIG CHANGE

## BISHOP STEPHEN'S PASTORAL LETTER FOR LENT (Excerpt)

My Dear People,

### REPENT AND BELIEVE IN THE GOSPEL!

A few weeks ago, on the first Sunday in Ordinary Time, we heard, from the Gospel of St Mark, the story of the Baptism of Jesus. Jesus was baptised in the River Jordan by John, and when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens open and the Holy Spirit descending upon him. The Gospel text speaks of a voice coming from heaven saying: '*You are my Beloved Son; with you I am well pleased!*'. Immediately afterwards, Jesus was driven into the desert by the Spirit of God and was tempted for 40 days by Satan, and the angels ministered to him. This 40-day period, of course, marks out for us symbolically the Christian Season of Lent, during which, from Ash Wednesday onwards, we will try to follow Jesus more closely. After his desert experience, Saint Mark tells us the first words Jesus utters in the Gospel, these are: "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel". So, the first words uttered by Jesus indicate that the first intention of his public ministry is to call the people to repentance. Of course, repentance implies a change in direction, a change of heart. So, by this change of heart, this *metanoia*, his people would begin to recognise the signs of the kingdom in their lives, in their communities and in their families.

Lent is our season of repentance which begins on Ash Wednesday. We are reminded by the Lord to fast, to pray, and to do penance. The call to do penance is not only because the Lord asks us to deny ourselves, but that by doing so, we can dislodge many of the attitudes and practices in our daily lives that can become obstacles, preventing us from seeing the signs of the kingdom among us. By the end of Lent then, we may be able, like the Centurion at the foot of the Cross, to look on Jesus crucified, and see him as the Son of God, who is our Saviour.

Saint Mark's Gospel beautifully prepares us for Easter, leading as it does from that Baptism of Jesus, through the events of his public ministry to his Passion, Suffering and Death on the Cross. And as part of our response to the Jesus we encounter there we are called to follow him, to serve him, to love him and to spend more time with him in prayer. We are called to 'choose life' at the beginning of this Lent - and for followers of Christ, this involves following our Lord more closely.

May I invite you, dear brothers and sisters, to meditate in your own homes on the Gospel of Saint Mark - perhaps even a few verses each day. The Gospel is short and can easily be covered over the period of Lent. You could also pray the Stations of the Cross or the Holy Rosary. And for those who can receive the internet, I also invite you to join one of the many daily Lenten Masses streaming from so many parishes and dioceses.

My dear people I look forward to the day when, very soon, our churches will once again be open and we shall be able to be together again in our parishes and re-join the full liturgical life of the Church, living our Catholic faith as fully as we possibly can. Towards the end of Lent, there will also be the opportunity afforded us once again, by the Apostolic Penitentiary in Rome, for the celebration of a Penitential Service with General Absolution so that as many of us as possible, in our straightened circumstances, can celebrate Easter fully prepared.

I have no crystal ball, of course, but perhaps by Easter we will be able to gather in larger numbers for Mass, and, unlike last year when we missed completely our public celebration of Holy Week and Easter, we shall be able to celebrate the Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ as fully as possible.

With every blessing to you and all your families.

Yours sincerely in Christ,  
+ Stephen Robson